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Dear Delaware Swine Producer:

This letter is intended to update you on the current status of the influenza virus that is currently being highlighted in the world media. It will also provide you with contact information and steps to follow in case you discover any type of illness among your own pigs. First of all, the term "Swine Flu" being used in the media has created a lot of confusion among the general public. This terminology implies that the virus originated from pigs, and that there could be a problem with pork products from regions where human illness has been detected. There is **NO EVIDENCE** which links swine to the human cases being reported around the world. There has been no reported disease resembling influenza among our swine populations. Please note that this new variant of H1N1 influenza **has not been identified** in any North American swine, or in any pigs worldwide to date.

During an April 26 White House briefing, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said people **cannot get swine flu from eating pork**. On April 28, Sec. Napolitano announced that the virus name will be changed from "Swine Flu virus" to "Influenza A, H1N1 virus" to eliminate the public confusion about this illness and to more accurately characterize it as a human-to-human transmitted virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the outbreak of a hybrid form of influenza has **not affected the safety of pork**. **Humans cannot contract this influenza from eating pork**.

The National Pork Board is collaborating with the CDC and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide information on the current influenza virus circulating in the human population. A useful fact sheet can be found at the following link: <http://www.pork.org/PorkScience/Documents/PUBLICHEALTH%20influenza.pdf>

DELAWARE SWINE PRODUCERS
Please read the following section very carefully!!

Steps to follow if you notice **swine** with any symptoms of illness which may be consistent with influenza (fever, lethargy, lack of appetite, coughing, or any other unexplained illness):

- **Immediately isolate the pig from the herd by moving it to an area where it will not spread the disease to other animals through nose-nose contact or shared waterers/feed troughs/etc.**
- **Wash your hands frequently, and take other precautions, such as changing clothing and boots before handling other pigs or leaving the area where animals are housed.**
- **Call your regular veterinarian, as you normally would, to obtain their advice regarding treatment of the sick pig(s) and other recommendations.**
- **Call the Delaware Department of Agriculture at 302-698-4500 and ask for Bob Moore.**
- **One of the DDA animal inspectors will discuss with you what the next steps are for getting your pig(s) tested as soon as possible for influenza virus.**

Swine producers should work with their herd veterinarian to reduce transmission of any type of influenza viruses by:

- Maintaining a current, routine vaccination program.
- Implementing worker sick-leave policies that encourage employees to remain away from work when they are suffering from acute respiratory infections.
- Maintaining appropriate ventilation in the barns.
- Enforcing basic hygiene and biosecurity practices, including the use of personal protective gear such as gloves and coveralls.
- Preventing pig-to-bird contact. *Bird-proof buildings and treat water if it supplied from an open body of water where birds and migratory fowl may be found. Separate pig and bird production to prevent any potential cross-contamination of the animals with influenza virus. Protect feed from feces of birds and migratory fowl.*

Background information on influenza in pigs:

- The clinical signs and/or symptoms of influenza in pigs are fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing.
- As external temperatures drop in the fall and winter, influenza persists better in the environment, and sudden temperature changes and other stressors can make pigs more susceptible to the virus
- Influenza season in pigs typically runs from November through April, although influenza viruses can be isolated from pigs year round.

Facts about pork:

- The risk of illness from consuming pork is minimal. If a pig with active influenza infection should arrive at a harvest facility, it would not pass the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) inspection because it would have obvious signs of illness. The sick animal would be condemned as 'not fit for human consumption'.
- FSIS has stated that even if surface contamination of a product should occur, common-sense food handling and preparation practices would minimize the risk of illness as normal cooking temperatures will inactivate the virus.

About interspecies transmission:

- It is possible for humans to transmit some influenza viruses to pigs. And it is possible, though not common, for pigs to transmit some influenza viruses to humans.
- Interspecies infections are most likely to occur when people are in extremely close proximity to pigs. The current human cases from March and April 2009 have been investigated, and none of the patients have reported any contact with swine.

Should you have any questions about human health, please contact the **Delaware Department of Public Health: Health Information and Epidemiology Group** at **302-744-4541**.

Questions about animal health can be directed to the **Delaware Department of Agriculture, Poultry and Animal Health Section** at **302-698-4500**, and ask for Bob Moore. Thank you for your cooperation.

Best Regards,



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